(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (c) The proposal is under examination.

Law for common age for marriage of girls and boys

2204. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken the final decision regarding common age for marriage for boys and girls;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to amend the existing law for the purpose; and

(c) the details of the salient features of the proposed amendments?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) does not arise in view of answer to (a) above.

Supreme Court's criticism of States not setting up Fast Track Courts

2205. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Supreme Court has recently criticised the States which have defaulted in setting up the requisite number of Fast Track Courts despite procuring full Central grant for the purpose;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when these States are likely to set up Fast Track Courts.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) In the case of Brij Mohan Lal *vs.* Uol and others, the Supreme Court in its order dated 29th April, 2004 and 29th July, 2005 observed that many State Governments did not file their replies despite Apex Court's direction about setting up of Fast Track Courts.

(b) The State Governments in default in setting up of requisite number of Fast Track Courts are Bihar, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab and West Bengal.

(c) The term of FTCs which were functional and whose term expired on 31.3.2005 were further made operational for a period of five years till 31.3.2010 with 100% Central funding. Only those FTCs (1562) which were made functional by State Governments were taken into consideration for extending their term.

Cases pending in courts

2206. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the total pending cases in the Supreme Court and each High Court as on the 1st January, 2006, court-wise;

(b) the reasons for such mounting number of pending cases; and

(c) the steps proposed to clear the huge stockpile of cases in the Supreme Court and various High Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) At present there are 33,635 cases in Supreme Court and 34,24,518 cases in High Courts reported to be pending. The High Court-wise break up is enclosed as Statement (See below).

(b) The main reasons leading to accumulation of arrears are:- population and litigation explosion, frequent adjournments, delay in disposal of old cases, delays in filling up of vacancies.

(c) In order to clear the huge stockpile of cases in the Supreme Court and various High Courts, the Government has initiated a number of measures which include, timely filling the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, grouping of cases, involving common question of law, constitution of specialized benches, organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals encouraging alternative modes of dispute resolution like negotiation, mediation and arbitration, and setting up of special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunals, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Family Courts and Labour Courts. The